

**PROPOSAL 201**

**5 AAC 32.150. Closed waters in Registration Area A.**

Expand closed water boundary lines for the Dungeness crab commercial fishery in the Sitka Sound Special Use Area during the summer season, as follows:

In accordance with 5 AAC 32.150, points 3 & 4 are moved northward and extend between Baranof Island to Chichagof Island only during the summer commercial crab fishery (June 15th – August 15th). Point 4 is moved to Nismeni point on Baranof Island (57 33 45 N, 135 24 52 W), and point 3 would be moved to Chichagof Island (57 31 18 N, 135 34 41 W). Sport Dungeness crab fishing and retention in this area is allowed and the bag limits do not change as written in sport fishing regulations.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The opportunity to harvest Dungeness crab for sport anglers in the Sitka area during summer months when the commercial fishery is being prosecuted is extremely limited without locals spending significant expense for fuel, bait, and effort. The reduction in opportunity for sport anglers is likely exacerbated in areas where sea otters are found, and as a greater number of commercial Dungeness crab permit holders have shifted effort to the Sitka area. Spring Dungeness crab opportunity is impacted during this time because many otherwise legal crab are molting and are not retained by sport anglers. During the summer months when there are a greater proportion of quality crabs (non-molting), locals sport anglers may catch many crab in each pot, but the proportion of legal males with a carapace equal to or greater than 6.5 inches are in very low proportion due to the commercial harvest effort. To ameliorate this, I suggest that the Board of Fish move the summer commercial crab boundary. The northern boundary would be between Nismeni Point on Baranof Island, and would extend west to Chichagof Island.

**PROPOSED BY:** Sitka Fish and Game Advisory Committee

(HQ-F20-086)

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